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Section C

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SPORTS

NC unable to keep pace with SC salaries

Part 1: A quick look at the numbers reveals why Walters is leaving South

By Bret McCormick
Sports Editor

The wonderful 1990s hip-hop star Mac Dre gave the world one of the most apt phrases of the modern era: "Don't hate the player, hate the game." Mac Dre could have been referring to many things, but the beauty of the saying is that it applies to numerous aspects of life.

High school coaching salaries in North Carolina and South Carolina are one such facet where the game should be hated and not the players.

The South Brunswick High School community was stunned last month when head football coach Gordon Walters announced he was leaving to take the head job at White Knoll High School in Lexington, S.C.

"I was disappointed. I was sad for our kids," said South Brunswick principal Vann Pennell on the news of Walters' imminent departure. "But knowing that sometimes you just got to do what's right for you and your family – and he assured us that was the reason. I admire him for taking that step, but it's definitely our loss and their gain."

A simple look at the salaries paid to Palmetto State football coaches reveals why Walters made the jump. Given the salaries that some schools there are able to offer, his move is considerably less surprising.

On the average, South Carolina's high school coaching salaries are not much greater than North Carolina's. But South Carolina has severe outliers on the high and low ends that distort those averages. The locality of South Carolina's education system allows flexibility that enables schools to pay coaches as much, or as little, as they see fit. The results are the highest paid football coach in the state makes \$104,000, while the lowest paid coach makes roughly \$26,000.

Socastee High School athletic director Roger Dixon spent 35 years in North Carolina high schools before moving to South Carolina in 2003. To him, the pay scale differences between the two states are readily apparent.

"Out of our area, the supplements are basically double for football coaches down here with 10 years of experience," said Dixon about Horry County, the district his school resides in. "Some of the other

districts may even pay higher than we do."

Basic differences

There are cardinal differences in the way coaches are paid in each state. North Carolina pays coaches a teacher's salary, and each district is free to add annual coaching supplements of its liking. In Brunswick County, coaches' base salaries are derived from their teaching qualifications, depending on their college degrees and experience.

Supplements for coaching duties are then tacked on based on the coach's experience on the sidelines. A Brunswick County head football coach can make up to \$4,430 in supplements based on their years of coaching experience.

South Carolina's system is markedly different. The chief distinction lies in the state's organization of its school districts. In North Carolina there are 115 administrative districts, with each of the state's 100 counties acting as its own school district. There are also 15 towns and cities that have their own administrative units. While South Carolina has just 46 counties, it has 85 school districts. Some

counties are home to just one school district while others have up to seven.

In Spartanburg County, perched in South Carolina's northwest corner, seven districts lie within the county's borders. In those seven districts are only nine high schools, and just two of those districts have more than one school inside the boundaries.

Naturally, most school districts try to pay coaches evenly to avoid allegations of favoritism or inequality. In some areas of South Carolina, it's easier to pay coaches handsomely when the money doesn't have to be partitioned amongst more than one or two coaches.

Fiscal autonomy

In addition to having fewer schools in each administrative unit, school districts in South Carolina have

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South coach
Gordon Walters

South crushes CFA

Cougs cope fine with key departures in 10-0 win

By Bret McCormick
Sports Editor

Behind home runs from Brooke Herr and Brooke Smith, South Brunswick hammered Cape Fear Academy 10-0 in softball last Thursday. The win pushed the Cougs' record to 2-2 on the new season, and was the team's first 10-run rule victory of the year.

Like many of South's other spring teams, Tony Spivey's softball squad is attempting to determine a replacement for an all-league performer, in this case graduated pitcher Candace Piner. She led the Cougs to the 2007 state finals and established a dominance over the Waccamaw Conference in her four years that several South pitchers will attempt to duplicate this year.

The main candidate to be Spivey's starter on the hill is Madison Batten. Thursday she picked up the win by limiting an overmatched Cape Fear team to just three hits. Batten has pitched in all four games this season but Spivey has the luxury of having several other arms just in case.

Freshmen Megan Spivey and Herr provide the team with pitching depth when needed. Spivey and Herr also currently make up the left side of the team's infield at least until Katelyn Clemmons returns from a shoulder injury in the next few weeks. Her return will allow Brittany Spivey to shift from catcher back to second base, Spivey's natural position.

Besides Herr and Smith's blasts, Megan Spivey, Sam Pruitt and Courtney Pearce pumped out triples against visiting Cape Fear as South scored 10 runs on nine hits. The Cougs played three runs

'Her junior year we went to the finals and we finished 27-5 and there was a lot of those games that we won by one or lost by one. To be able to get that far you have to have a pitcher that can throw as well as Candace could throw but also to have the ability, the knack of staying in the game with pressure. That's what we're going to have to learn to do this year.'

South softball coach Tony Spivey, speaking about graduated pitcher Candace Piner

in the fourth and four in the fifth to end the game early and get the first big win of the season.

Tony Spivey knew that his team might start a bit slow this season as they iron out their pitching

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Photo by Jim Harper
One of numerous Cougar softball players to have spent countless hours playing travel ball on the weekends, it will take a lot to faze freshman Megan Spivey on the softball diamond. Additionally, Spivey was the starting point guard on South's basketball team, which gave her plenty of experience playing under varsity-level pressure.

COUGAR BASEBALL

Jones, Carlson pitch South to first two wins of 2009 season

By Bret McCormick
Sports Editor

An excellent pitching performance from junior Robert Jones allowed South Brunswick to nip a 3-2 win over visiting George Washington High School last Thursday. On Friday, South headed down to Socastee High School, near Myrtle Beach, S.C., and played the Patriots again, and won again 6-2 behind another solid pitching performance, this one courtesy of Tyler Carlson.

George Washington, down at the coast for the week from West Virginia, finished fourth in their state last year and provided the Cougars with a good challenge before Waccamaw Conference play starts this week, while also giving South their first wins of the campaign.

In Thursday's contest South got some timely hits in the bottom of the sixth inning, but can thank Jones for staying in the game up to that point. The junior right-hander wasn't blowing the ball by any of the Patriot hitters but he moved the ball around the strike zone continually throughout the ballgame, and took a no-hitter into the fourth inning before consecutive George Washington singles.

"My arm just felt good the whole night, and it got better as

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Photo by Jim Harper
South Brunswick pitchers Robert Jones (shown here) and Tyler Carlson succeeded last week in forcing George Washington batters into a series of ground balls, an effective method of getting batters out for pitchers like Jones and Carlson who don't throw terribly hard.

Topsail 3, South Brunswick 1

Topsail reveals problem areas

By Bret McCormick
Sports Editor

Welcome to the post Kat Adams era of South Brunswick girls soccer. Topsail beat the Cougs 3-1 last Friday night as Randy Young's team fell to 2-3 on the young season. After the visiting Pirates went ahead 2-0 just before halftime, Katelyn Alston pulled a goal back midway through the second frame, but Topsail scored a decisive third goal with 15 minutes left to seal the Pirates' win.

Elizabeth Butler and Gabby Alcorn split time between the posts for South, with Butler playing the first half and part of the second for the Cougs. After being chipped for the Pirates' first goal, Butler raced to the sideline for some encouragement from Young. It was hard not to feel for the junior, whose soccer experience has come largely in the field and not in goal.

"She's inexperienced, she's never played varsity," said Young about Butler. "But she wants it, she works hard at it. It's a learning process but the work ethic and the drive is there."

Adams graduated last year and now plays soccer for Guilford College. Adams could have been called "The Eraser" during her four years at South because her athleticism and dominance of the penalty area allowed her to expunge any mistakes the defenders in front of her committed.

South sweeper Ashley Kjome is increasingly aware of "The Eraser's" absence.

"We have to really be on our guard," said Kjome after the game. "We could usually count on Kat to stop nine out of ten goals. With new people back there, they're really inexperienced so we just have



Photo by Bret McCormick
Even with 11 seniors gone from last year, South Brunswick's modus operandi has not changed. Coach Randy Young still wants his players to be physical, a trait exemplified here by Brooke Holden.

to rely on ourselves and make sure we're right there and not make any mistakes."

Without Adams in goal, the Cougs have to be much more attentive on dead ball situations, such as corner and free kicks. Topsail scored their second and third goals off of free kicks into the box that Butler and Alcorn initially saved. But Pirate players beat South to the loose balls and belted them into the open net both times. Topsail's second goal was crucially scored with only a minute left in the first half, a killer blow heading into the halftime team talk.

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